

2006 CHILDREN'S NEEDS ASSESSMENT



Alabama's Children Grow Up to Change the World

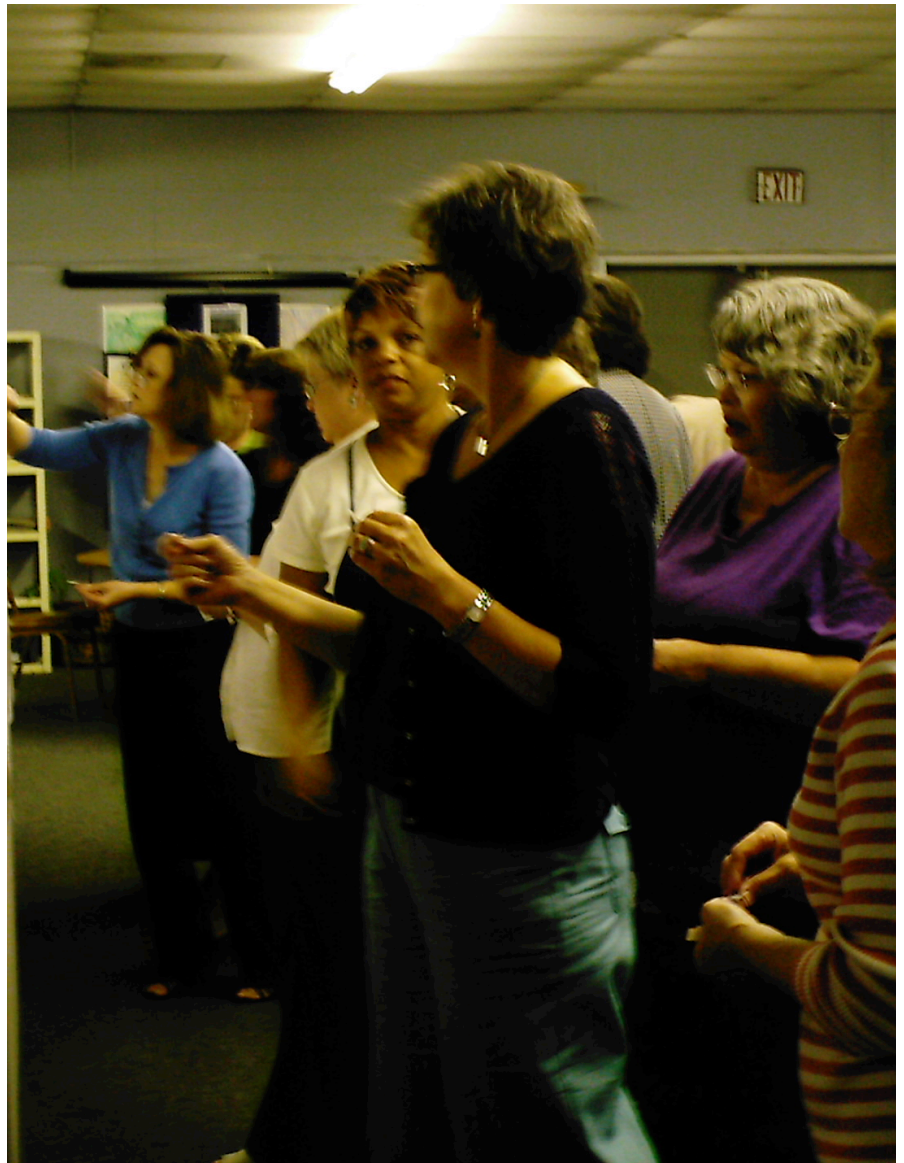
Produced by the Alabama Children's Policy Council, Children's Policy Councils in each of Alabama's 67 counties, and the Alabama Department of Children's Affairs.
www.children.alabama.gov

INTRODUCTION

This is the sixth year that Children's Policy Councils (CPC) from across the state have submitted Needs Assessments to the State Children's Policy Council. The Needs Assessment serves several very important purposes. It fulfills a legal responsibility of both the county Children's Policy Councils and the Alabama Children's Policy Council. It serves as an avenue for the counties and state to identify the issues that are affecting our children's lives and ability to grow into productive citizens. It also gives the members of the council a link to policy makers in Montgomery and Washington.

Needs Assessments are reviewed by agencies and legislators to learn what is needed and where priorities should be placed. Additionally, Children's Policy Councils consistently report that the most valuable benefit of the Needs Assessment is the local communication and planning that it fosters.

Alabama law requires that Children's Policy Councils submit their Needs Assessments by July 1st of each year and that the Alabama Children's Policy Council prepare this compiled report by October 1. The Department of Children's Affairs utilized a standardized list of descriptions to label and compare the county Issues and Priorities. Reports are prepared for several state agencies with the Policy Recommendations from the councils that are relevant to those agencies missions. The Department of Children's Affairs staff work with the counties and agencies on many of these recommendations to build better communication and facilitate positive outcomes.



This year, all 67 of Alabama's counties submitted Needs Assessments.

FORMAT

The format of the Needs Assessment was developed by a committee of county CPC representatives and child advocates. It is designed to promote discussion in a broad range of categories that affect children's lives, provide information to state agencies, and serve as a starting point for a strategic plan. The Needs Assessment has three parts: Part I asks councils to identify Issues and Action Steps in six categories; Part II provides an opportunity to make Policy Recommendations that are forwarded to state agencies and the Legislature; and Part III requires the council to narrow the issues to the top three priority outcomes for children in the county.

WHAT IS A CHILDREN'S POLICY COUNCIL?

Children's Policy Councils were created in each county in 2000 (Code of Alabama, Sec. 12-15- 133) to assess the needs of children in the county and to build cooperation between various entities and interest groups. The ultimate goal for the creation of the Children's Policy Council system is to mobilize providers of services for children and involve them working collaboratively to develop a community service plan which addresses the needs of children (ages 0 to 19). By empowering community decision makers with necessary knowledge and a coordinated plan, problematic issues regarding children can be resolved. The county CPC is chaired by the local Juvenile Judge and has 15 mandated members plus seven members at-large. The legislative mandate of the CPC is to meet at least quarterly, to set policy and procedures for children's services, to identify gaps in services, to encourage agency collaboration in order to avoid duplication of services, to conduct an annual Needs Assessment for the needs of children in the community and to maintain a list of local resources for children's services for their county. The membership of the CPC is a diverse cross section of public and private individuals interested in improving children's lives.

Armetta Rogers, VISTA Volunteer for the Cherokee CPC initiated a summer reading program that helped increase the reading ability of youth in her county.

Judge Terri Bozeman Lovell, chair of the Lowndes CPC hosted an annual Health Fair that served over 500 Lowndes County residents.

Morgan County CPC Executive Director, Cindy Moses, collaborated with the Decatur Police Department in presenting the I-Safe program at First Baptist Church.

Rashanda Hicks, the Barbour CPC UPS Coordinator brought the "Too Good for Drugs" program to Barbour County Schools and Eufaula City Schools.

Judicial Perspective

Juvenile Judge - Chair
Chief Juvenile Probation Officer
District Attorney

Legislative Perspective

Local Legislators
County Commissioner

Public Safety Perspective

Department of Public Safety*
Alcoholic Beverage Control Board*
Sheriff

Social Services Perspective

Department of Human Resources
Dept. of Mental Health and Mental Retardation
Department of Youth Services
Department of Rehabilitation Services
Medicaid Agency*
Superintendent of Education
Department of Public Health

Community Perspective

Seven additional members from:
State and local government officials
Practicing attorneys
Community organizations
Business and industry leaders
Representatives of any other agencies or organizations providing services to families and children in the county.

Keith Stringfellow, Bibb County JPO worked with ABC agent Mike Reese to bring "Save Our Teens" to every school in Bibb County.

Judge Rhonda Hardesty, Chilton County CPC, implemented an Early Warning Program which deters children from missing school.

Shirley Varner, Bullock CPC, has implemented "Matters of the Heart". The program involves 12 teenagers working with 500 lower elementary students.

Arthur Threatt, Washington CPC, took twelve junior classmen from Leroy High School to Auburn University to view the campus and explore the positive aspects of education.

PART I - Issues

One of the first steps in the Needs Assessment process is the identification and discussion of issues in each of the six categories. This is often done through committees established by the council. Issues are the primary concerns or problems that put children at risk. Discussion in the committee will often identify several issues and the committee will narrow the list down to the two to three most important issues. Once a council has identified the issues facing the county, it lists concrete Action Steps that the CPC can accomplish. These actions can be major or minor steps; they can be short or long term. This is the first initiative towards developing a Strategic Plan for the council.



Walker County CPC working on Needs Assessment

The Department of Children's Affairs provides councils with a list of Descriptions to help to label the issues. Issues are designed to reflect the needs of the children in the community. A total of 1150 issues were identified. This represents a 14% increase over 2004. Issues are grouped by the assigned Description and DCA reports the percentage of counties that had at least one issue with that description.



Health

Children's physical and mental well-being in the county



Safety

Children live free of abuse, neglect, crime, and drugs.



Education

Children learn the skills necessary to become productive citizens.



Economic Security

Children grow up in a financially stable home where each child's basic needs can be met.



Early Care and Education

Children (0-5) are provided opportunities to fully develop emotionally, socially, physically, and cognitively and are ready to succeed.

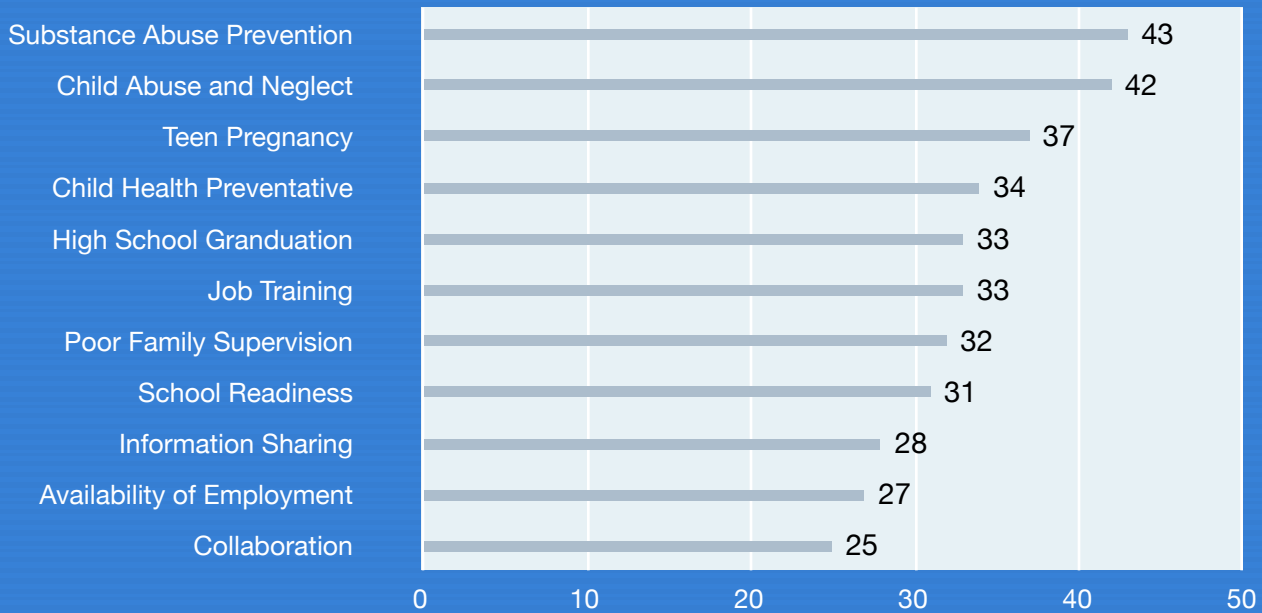


Parent Involvement and Skills

Parents and guardians and effectiveness in fostering an environment for children to become mature, responsible and independent adults.

Top Issues

Number of Counties Identifying Issue



Top Issues Over Time

Over the years which issues have been identified by more than half of the councils?

2002	
Child Health Issues	64%

2004	
Parent Involvement / Skills	75%
Substance Abuse Prevention	57%
Child Health Issues	56%
Job Training	56%
Access to Childcare	52%
School Readiness	51%

2006	
Substance Abuse Prevention	64%
Child Abuse and Neglect	63%
Teen Pregnancy	55%
Child Health Preventative	51%

2003	
Child Health Issues	72%
Delinquency Prevention	66%
Job Training	64%
Parent Involvement / Skills	64%
Access to Childcare	61%
Substance Abuse Prevention	56%

2005	
Child Abuse and Neglect	60%
Poor Family Supervision	52%
Substance Abuse Prevention	52%
School Readiness	51%

In 2005 the Description List was expanded to provide for a more accurate representation of the Issues or Priorities.

PART II - Policy Recommendations

Policy Recommendations are listed that would help the county address the needs of children. This may include specific policy changes for state agencies or specific changes to legislation to:

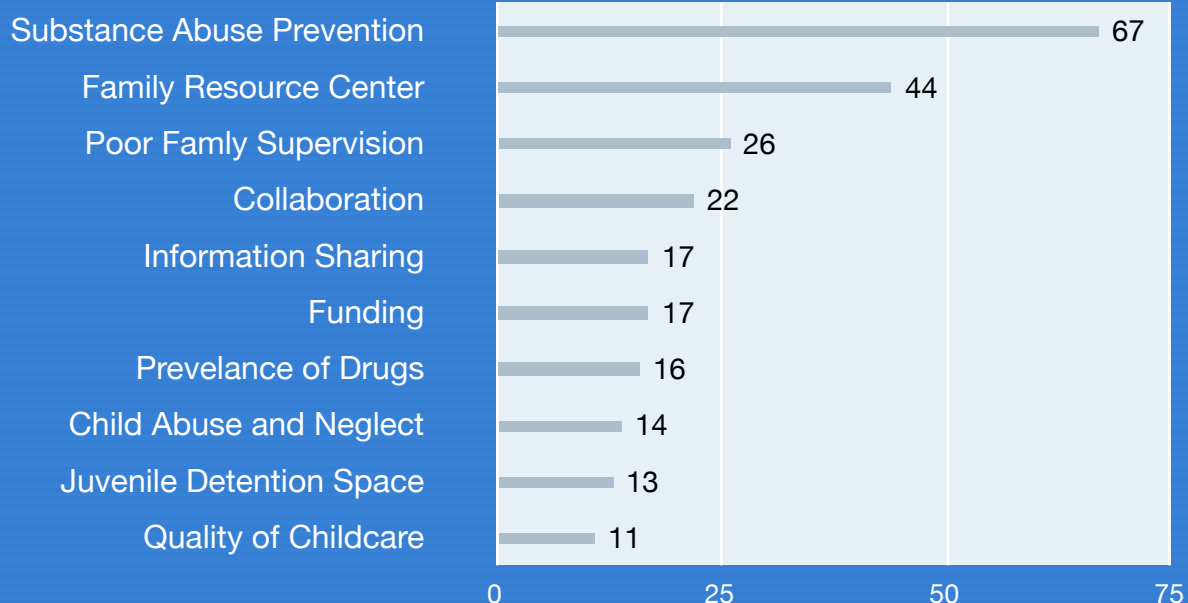
- (1) improve the way services are provided,
- (2) eliminate road blocks or red tape that hinder quality services, or
- (3) provide for local flexibility in state programs.

PART III - Priorities

Once the Issues, Action Steps, and Recommendations have been developed for each category the council then identifies the three priorities for the county's children. This is when the council members must decide which are the most pressing issues. These outcomes should reflect the council priorities for itself, its members, and the community for the next year.

Sixty Seven counties listed the top priorities for their council and county in the coming year. These priorities were analyzed based upon the Descriptions selected by the county. In analyzing the priorities, weight was given to the higher priorities. Top priorities were given three points, second priorities were given two points, and third priorities were given one point. This was totaled to get the Weighted Value. Counties were limited to their top three priorities. By limiting the responses to the top three and applying more value to the higher priorities we are able to see what is most important in the view of the Children's Policy Councils. Substance Abuse Prevention was the top issue this year and was clearly the top priority among the councils. Family Resource Centers just cracked the top ten issues, but when it came down to the priorities it finished a strong second. Substance Abuse Prevention was the top priority for 11 counties and Family Resource Centers was the top priority for ten counties.

Top Priorities By Weighted Value



Sample Priorities

Substance Abuse Prevention

Covington	To provide more substance abuse prevention in Covington County.
Pickens	All children will have parents who are knowledgeable of good parenting practices, age appropriate supervision and discipline techniques, and parent/child communication skills
Marion	All children in Marion County will be free from drug and/or alcohol abuse
Winston	Establish an effective system for prevention and intervention for tobacco and substance abuse
Fayette	All children live in a drug free environment.
Jackson	To decrease the rampant use of and manufacturing of crystal methamphetamine

Family Resource Center

Marshall	Work with the community to develop an educational component in a centrally located family resource center
Dallas	Need better coordination of services through a Family Service Center, which involves existing local agencies in leadership.
Elmore	Family Resource Center - secure permanent funding and building
Bullock	Establish a Family Services Center in Bullock County with input from all agencies serving families and children in the county.
Barbour	Seek programs to assist families as a whole in basic living skills; such as parenting skills, financial management, discipline options, Example: multi-systemic approach
Choctaw	Develop a family resource center
Greene	State funding to establish a Resource Center in Greene County

Other

Coffee	Increase parenting skills. Many parents lack the skills necessary to help their children become mature and responsible adults.
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Information Sharing

Etowah	The community, education officials, and social service providers will be aware of the resources available in Etowah County
Dale	Informing public about existing community resources
Lowndes	Community awareness of existing resources

Funding

Madison	Adequate funding for social service programs (various)
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Collaboration

Jefferson	Continue to build collaboration among child serving agencies, organizations and individuals in Jefferson County
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ARMS

Alabama Resource Management System

Overview

The Alabama Resource Management System (ARMS) is an innovative approach to enhance coordination between agencies, public/private sector, and community information systems. ARMS will connect these sources in a manner that will provide the ability to visualize, analyze, query and map the information.



ARMS has two primary target audiences, state agencies and local communities. The development of the ARMS system was initiated by the Department of Children's Affairs and the U.S. Space and Rocket Center. It will be led by a coalition of state agencies, non-profits, and elected officials. ARMS is being funded through contributions from coalition members.

OBJECTIVES

- IDENTIFY SERVICES
- VISUALIZE OUTCOME MEASURES
- FACILITATE DIALOGUE
- SUPPORT COMMUNITY AND AGENCY STRATEGIC PLANNING
- BRING NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE AND RECOGNITION
- PROVIDE A BASE OF INFORMATION FOR ADDITIONAL ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH SUPPORT
- PROVIDE A FRAMEWORK FOR DATA CURRENTLY BEING COLLECTED

www.arms.alabama.gov

PARTNERS

DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN'S AFFAIRS
 U.S. SPACE AND ROCKET CENTER
 DEPART. OF MENTAL HEALTH & MENTAL RETARDATION
 ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF COURTS
 DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES
 DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
 DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS
 UNITED WAYS OF ALABAMA
 211 - CALL FOR HELP
 VOICES FOR ALABAMA'S CHILDREN
 HEALTH PLANING AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
 CHILDREN'S TRUST FUND
 ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL BOARD
 CHILDREN'S POLICY COUNCILS

BIOGRAPHIES



HANK ARRON

Born in Mobile, Hank Aaron was elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame and is the all time home run champ with 755 home runs.
baseballhalloffame.org



HARPER LEE

Nelle Harper Lee was born on April 28 1926 in Monroeville Alabama is the author of To Kill A Mockingbird
mokingbird.chebucto.org



DR. KATHRYN C. THORNTON

Born August 17, 1952, in Montgomery, Alabama. A veteran of three space flights, Dr. Thornton flew on STS-33 in 1989, STS-49 in 1992, and STS-61 in 1993. She has logged over 975 hours in space, including more than 21 hours of extravehicular activity (EVA).
nasa.gov



NAT KING COLE

Nat King Cole was a black man, who became a very famous jazz pianist and singer. His music is still enjoyed today especially because his daughter Natalie has re-released his wonderful music. He was born in Montgomery.
pcug.org



HELEN KELLER

Born in Tuscumbia she was awarded the Presidential Medal of Honor and is an inspiration for her fight to overcome her disability.
wikipedia.org



JIMMY BUFFETT

Jimmy Buffett grew up on the eastern shore of Mobile Bay. He attended high school at McGill Institute for Boys and went to Auburn. Buffett is an famous musician and author best known for his "island escapism" lifestyle.
wickipedeia.org & margaritaville.com



DR. CONDOLEEZZA RICE

Born November 14, 1954 in Birmingham, Alabama, Dr. Condoleezza Rice became the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, commonly referred to as the National Security Advisor, on January 22, 2001.
whitehouse.gov



W.C. HANDY

W.C. Handy was born in Florence and is regarded as the "Father of the Blues."
una.edu



HANK WILLIAMS

Born in Mount Olive West (near Georgiana) is credited for giving country music much of its standard repertoire and is still the model for countless singers and songwriters.
hankwilliams.com

BIOGRAPHIES



HUGO L. BLACK

Hugo Lafayette Black was born in the hill country of Alabama. He was raised and educated in Ashland where his father was a businessman. Justice Black served on the U.S Supreme Court for 34 years
oyez.org



MARVA COLLINS

Marva Collins grew up in Atmore, started the Westside Preparatory School in an impoverished neighborhood of Chicago. She is famous for applying classical education successfully with impoverished students, many of whom had been labelled as 'learning-disabled' by public schools.
wikipedia.org



ROSA PARKS

Rosa Parks was born in Tuskegee and is regarded as a pioneer of Civil Rights for refusing to give up her seat on a bus in Montgomery.
achievement.org



WALLACE D. MALONE, JR

Born in Dothan, Wallace Malone Jr. helped organize SouthTrust Bank which grew to one of the top 20 banks in the country as he served as Chairman and CEO.
Alabama Business Hall of Fame



DR. DAVID SATCHER

Born in Anniston, Dr. David Satcher is the 16th Surgeon General of the United States.
topblacks.com



JANICE ROGERS BROWN

Born in Greenville, Justice Brown is a Judge on the US Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit.
wikipedia.org



SOPHIA BRACY HARRIS

Grew up in Wetumpka, Sophia Harris is considered by many to be one of the first advocates for early care and education and has been recognized across the nation for her work in Alabama



BETSY ROGERS

Betsy Rogers was born in Birmingham,, and graduated from Woodlawn High School in the Birmingham Public School System. She was the 2003 National Teacher of the Year.
ccsso.org



ROBIN MACKEY

Robin lives grew up in Jacksonville and is responsible for bringing the Parent Project to Alabama and for spearheading its expansion across Alabama.